

# Journey to Journaling

Art Journaling: Self-expression and creativity

If you have ever wanted to take your craft supplies and splash them all over pages of paper with wanton abandon, then an art journal is the perfect playground for you. The word “journal” may be misleading or intimidating. An art journal is a book of self-expression, whether words are an integral part or it is a diary of events told through sketched images. It is a safe environment to practice your



DIANA  
HIRSCH

handwriting for journaling. It can be a collection of color palettes, scrapbook layouts or décor ideas. Whatever you choose, it is created by you for you.

Why should you immerse yourself in art journaling? After all, how can you justify starting another project when you are constantly catching up on your scrapbooking? Unlike traditional paper crafting, which is often done for others, this is yours, all yours. An art journal presents the perfect opportunity to create and focus on your personal journey. Art journaling is all about the creative process. It is an exploration of art, techniques, products and ideas.

If this is your first art journal, do not get hung up on seeking the perfect book or making your own by hand. Walk into an arts and crafts store, choose a spiral bound paper pad

## General supplies for art journaling

**Paper:** Arches, Canson, Strathmore

**Gesso:** Claudine Hellmuth, Golden, Liquitex, Winsor & Newton

**Gel medium:** Golden, Grumbacher, Liquitex

**Paints:** Watercolor, acrylic, oil, fabric

**Pens and pencils:** Faber-Castell, Kohi-noor, Prismacolor, Sakura

and go. Bristol or watercolor papers are good options because they are sturdy and flexible for any art medium you choose to explore. Beginners should consider a larger size so that there is room to flex those creative muscles you have not exercised in awhile. Limiting your creative space may limit your creativity.

Whatever style you choose, the blank page is the worst part and the hardest to overcome. Write your name in the book to identify it as yours. Now that your journal is no longer empty, open the book to a random page in the middle. By unconventionally starting in the middle, you reduce expectations of needing to start perfectly. Now let the fun flow.

The first step is to create a background. There is no defined way to do this; here is



Any material can be used as collage. Here I used music sheets, book pages, napkins and painted fabric.



An art journal can create a unique scrapbook page. I made a collage of various scrapbook paper, a cigar wrapper, and a candy bag, stitched together randomly. I ended up unexpectedly with a space to use as a photo mat, so I used it for a picture.



Layering spray inks and stencils in random directions produced unexpected combinations on this page.





By squirting paint on paper and squeezing it closed, you can achieve texture and designs when you open the book. I added some Zentangle and an expression of how I was feeling that day.



I used a border punch and weaved a ribbon on the edge of this painted page.



Paper scraps can create a mosaic and provide the base of a page.



where you explore the possibilities of your supplies. Much like placing flower embellishments on top of photos that are on photo mats that are adhered to a scrapbook page, think layers and create depth. Cover an entire page with a wash of paint and stamp images on top of that. Adhere a collage of papers and then spray color mist on random areas. You may already do these techniques on cards or scrapbook pages, but that is a confined, defined space. An art journal presents a larger terrain to play in.

How long "should" creating a page or an entire journal take? Just like any scrapbook page, you can whip it together in 15 minutes or spend a couple hours perfecting it. A good

I used washi tape to create a mask in random areas on this page.



# Picture Perfect

Embossing

**WE DO CUSTOM:** Imprinting,  
Album Covers & Designs  
Digital outside, traditional inside

**734-326-6373**

**JOIN US FOR A WEEKEND CROP!**

A great time and a great value!  
More info & sign up on our website.

**VISIT OUR ONLINE STORE > [www.ShopPicturePerfect.com](http://www.ShopPicturePerfect.com)**

## Cropin' Inn The Country

### Maximize your cropping time

with three full days! Weekends go from 9am on Fridays until 4pm on Sundays. Individuals, groups, and consultant events welcome. Beautiful, clean, comfortable environment. Massages available.



16135 Petz Rd, Capac, MI 48014  
Check out special pricing on our website

**CropinInnTheCountry.com**  
586-677-9660 • 586-709-4246

challenge is to set a timer to complete a page. That may sound stressful at first, but that becomes freeing after doing it a few times.

Two common ways to construct a page are with color or a particular medium. The appeal is that these techniques are interchangeable. If you start with color, think of a specific event that happened recently and use the color associated with your emotion. Use shades of a favorite color for a monochromatic page. You can then apply images on top of that. If you start with a particular texture medium as your base—paper, gesso or even pencil journaling—you can layer that with another element. Because this is freeform art, if you do not like a design element you created, just splotch some paint over it and move on.

After that, welcome to a mixed-media frenzy. Buttons and lace can all be elements of an altered art page. Dribble alcohol ink along the sides to create a funky border or practice blending alcohol pens. Journal words in different colors of gel pens and outline them in

black or white. If you give yourself permission to create for yourself, then you give yourself courage and confidence using products you have or want to try.

Make time to journal frequently. Since art journals can be autobiographical, be sure to chronicle your latest obsession with a new rubber stamp, or collage postage stamps and music paper. Experiment with themes, broad and narrow, such as "hope," "faith," or owls. Look to prompts, poems and song lyrics for ideas. Your art journal is a haven for your visual images, a book you may choose to share or not. It is a place to sketch and draw like you did as a child. In fact, watch kids as they play and take inspiration from their creativity.

Be fearless. ✿

*Diana Hirsch is a Certified Zentangle Teacher and an award-winning writer. To inquire about classes or writing availability, contact her at [diwolf@aol.com](mailto:diwolf@aol.com) or visit her blog at [www.wolfhowlings.wordpress.com](http://www.wolfhowlings.wordpress.com).*